# News Release
# Communiqué

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Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée

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## MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT IMPROVES ACCESS TO CANCER CARE IN BARRIE

*New Mobile Radiation Unit To Open At Royal Victoria Hospital This Fall*

QUEEN'S PARK – The McGuinty government is improving access to cancer treatment for patients throughout Simcoe County and Muskoka by investing approximately $4.5 million for a new mobile radiation unit at Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"We are improving access to much needed cancer treatment for patients in the North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)," said Smitherman. "This investment will mean more Barrie area residents will not have to wait as long or travel as far to get the treatment they need."

Today's investment will allow for the operation of a new mobile radiation bunker at Royal Victoria Hospital. Starting this fall, this new unit can begin serving up to 400 patients annually and reduce the time people are waiting to get treatment.

"Every year cancer patients from Simcoe-Muskoka must travel to other cancer centres in Ontario for their lifesaving radiation therapy. For the typical patient, that's 35 difficult trips," says Royal Victoria Hospital President and Chief Executive Officer Janice Skot. "This mobile radiation facility at our hospital will have a positive and immediate impact on cancer patients, who will now have access to radiation therapy well in advance of the opening of the new Simcoe-Muskoka Regional Cancer Centre."

This unit will continue to operate while the hospital's new Simcoe-Muskoka Regional Cancer Centre is being built. Construction will begin in 2008 and will include an additional 101 acute care beds at the hospital.

The early addition of the mobile radiation facility at Royal Victoria Hospital will also allow the hospital to recruit radiation therapists, nuclear medicine physicists, and radiation oncologists in advance of the centre's opening.

"This new mobile radiation bunker clearly signals that this government is putting patients first," said Jean Trimnell, CEO of the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN. "We are pleased that patients in Barrie and the surrounding area will have access to state-of-the-art cancer treatment close to home."

"Royal Victoria Hospital's mobile radiation bunker is a Canadian first," said Terry Sullivan, President and CEO of Cancer Care Ontario. "This cancer treatment innovation will provide hundreds of Barrie-area patients with high quality radiation therapy at their local hospital with additional professional staff assistance from Toronto Sunnybrook Regional Cancer Centre."

This initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan to build a health care system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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